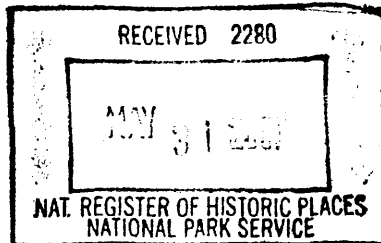


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Other names/site number CD13-001

2. Location

Street & number 102 and 108 East 9th Street

Not for publication

City or town St. Helena

Vicinity

State Nebraska Code NE County Cedar Code 027 Zip code 68774

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Lawrence Sommer
Signature of certifying official

5/24/01
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

see continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

Edson A. Beall 7/5/01

[Signature]
Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church & Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- Private
- Public-local
- Public-state
- Public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

RELIGION/church-related residence

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Sandstone

Walls Brick

Roof Asphalt

Other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** Removed from its original location.
- C** A birthplace or a grave.
- D** A cemetery.
- E** A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** A commemorative property.
- G** Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1897, 1919

Significant Dates

November 20, 1897 – Church Dedication

1919 – Construction of Rectory

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Josef Schwartz

Heinrich Stuckenhoff

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- Previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- Designated a National Historic Landmark
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location for additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than 1

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	643270	4740900	3.			
2.				4.			

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill M. Ebers – Historic Buildings Survey Coordinator

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date April 18, 2001

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone (402) 471-4773

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska zip code 68501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Archdiocese of Omaha, c/o the Most Reverend Curtiss

street & number 100 North 62nd Street

telephone (402) 558-3100

city or town Omaha

state Nebraska zip code 68132

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, with its associated rectory, is located in St. Helena, Cedar County, Nebraska. St. Helena is approximately 185 miles from Lincoln, the State's capitol, resting in the extreme northeastern region of Nebraska. Indeed, St. Helena is merely eight miles south and east of Yankton, South Dakota. The town has a population of 87 residents according to the 1990 census. St. Helena sits in the midst of rolling hills of farmland. The hills were formed by glacial till that has eroded and been mantled with loess. The church and rectory occupy a central dale within the town, and is surrounded by cornfields and several houses to the west.

Church

The 1897 Gothic Revival church is rectangular in plan, with an apse to the rear of the church. An asphalt shingle, gabled roof follows the rectangular footprint of the interior. The front façade (north) contains a central bell tower entrance located under a high recessed gothic arch, with an arched stained glass window below. The front façade also contains a large roundel stained-glass window. A broached spire, with crosses and clocks on each of the four primary sides, graces the bell tower. The Star Tower clock was added to the building in 1910. The clock still functions using an elaborate system of weights and pulleys, but it is not very efficient and must be wound frequently. The church has a foundation made of sandstone. The walls are primarily tan brick, with red sandstone belt coursings and arched window caps. Engaged buttresses of brick and stone help provide support to the walls. Each buttress is embellished with a spire that is further decorated with a cross. Seven spires line each side of the gabled roofline, as well as the four corners of the bell tower. The church retains its original stained glass windows. Aside from the large window above the main entrance, there are two large panels on the front façade. There are also six panels along the east and west elevations and two windows in the apse, all in a Gothic arch formation. Each window depicts stylized foliage and geometric designs, and several include German phrases. "Gewidmet von der altar verein" indicates that one window was dedicated to the altar society. Another window has a phrase that says, "Gewidmet vom dritten orden des H. L. Franciscus," which dedicates the window to the third order of St. Francis. Storm windows have been installed to protect the stained glass windows.

The sanctuary is decorated to match the building's Gothic theme. The sanctuary has high, vaulted ceilings with ten octagonal columns at regular intervals. It contains seventy-six pews of rich oak, each decorated with quatrefoils and Gothic arches. The alter rail, which was removed but retained, is also oak decorated in a similar way. The oak confessional continues the Gothic theme with arches, trefoils and quatrefoils, and Gothic spires. The apse and side altars contain large altars with statuary and a depiction of the Last Supper. Stations of the Cross are found between each of the Gothic windows along the sides. A choir loft, where the 1910 pipe organ is found, is located at the rear of the church. The loft is enclosed with a closed rail embellished with trefoils and Gothic arches.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

Rectory

The 1919 rectory is a two and one-half story elaborate, brick veneer Four Square with a composition hardboard tile, hipped roof. The roof has three gabled dormers, one on the front or north façade, and one each on the east and west elevations of the building. Each dormer has one small double-hung window flanked by diamond-patterned sidelights under a decorative brick arch. A simple square chimney is located toward the rear of the house. The rectory has boxed eaves with several decorative brackets on the front façade. It has a brick foundation and is clad with a brick veneer. There are two soldier coursings of darker colored brick; one is located directly below the eaves and the other just above the foundation. The sills and lintels of each of the windows, which are all one-over-one double-hung, consist of upright stretchers of this darker brick. The north façade has a full-width front porch, also constructed of brick, with ornamental Gothic arches done in dark brickwork. Four substantial square brick columns support the porch.

The church and the rectory are bounded on two sides by a cast iron fence. Each vertical bar along the fence is crowned with a finial and looped spirals. Elaborate gateways lead to each building. A set of three rows of bushes and a concrete retaining wall separate the rectory from the church grounds.

A non-contributing garage is located adjacent to the rectory. Another non-contributing building is located behind the church building. A modern Parish Center was constructed approximately two decades ago, and does not contribute to the complex of buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory, located in St. Helena, Nebraska, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C. It has massive articulated wall structures, Gothic arches and vaulted ceilings. The rectory is an exquisite example of a Four Square; the simple design is adorned with decorative brickwork to mimic the Gothic nature of the church next door.

Settlers of predominately German descent established St. Helena in 1858. In 1862, the people of St. Helena agreed to build a permanent church, which was completed a year later. It sat on ten acres of land southwest of town, which was donated by Gerhard Arndt and set aside for a chapel and a cemetery. Within a few decades, the congregation outgrew the small frame chapel, and a larger church was needed. This time, they proposed to build within St. Helena.

Members of the parish laid the cornerstone of the current church on June 16, 1896, with Father Dexacher officiating the ceremony. Architect Josef Schwartz designed the church building, which looks remarkably similar to Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church (CD03-004) that he designed for Bow Valley, Cedar County, Nebraska, a mere ten miles away and seven years later. The Bow Valley church is Romanesque Revival, while St. Helena's is Gothic Revival; in other respects other than scale, the designs are nearly identical. Ss. Peter and Paul Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 5 July 2000. Interestingly, the same man, Heinrich Stuckenoff, was hired as the builder for both the Bow Valley and St. Helena churches. He was an acquaintance of Father Schoof, the resident priest of Immaculate Conception at the time of construction. Stuckenoff met Fr. Schoof when he lived in St. Helena briefly in 1883. The construction was completed within eighteen months from the date the cornerstone was laid at a cost of approximately \$20,000. A stable and a rectory, both non-extant, were built nearby. Immaculate Conception Church exhibits a high degree of historic integrity. Aside from some alterations suggested by the Vatican during the 1970s, such as the removal of the alter rail and the introduction of a Reconciliation Room (a face to face confessional) intended to make Catholicism more approachable for the layman, the design of the building is intact. A handicap ramp was added to the east side of the building in the 1970s as well. Aside from these prescribed and necessary changes, the church adheres to the original designs laid out by Schwartz at the end of the last century.

Members of the parish have been dedicated to the upkeep and enhancement of their church since it was built. During the first decade of the twentieth century, they raised funds to buy a pipe organ for \$2,000. The pipe organ is still present, and continues to be used for Mass. In 1910, parishioners purchased the Star Tower clock that adorns the four faces of the bell tower for \$750. The clock chimes the hours and half-hours, and must be wound manually on a daily basis. The clock's mechanism is located on the second level of the bell tower, but the pulleys and weights run through the entire height of the bell tower. Two years after installing the clock, parishioners paved sidewalks around the church and rectory and purchased new furnaces. Members of the congregation purchased the Stations of the Cross and donated the side altars in 1919. In 1939, the church was wired for electricity. Until the late 1930s, light in the sanctuary was provided by sunlight through the stained glass windows and candlelight. As in other small towns in the area, the church is the center of social and

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

philanthropic life in St. Helena. Parishioners were proud of their parish church and worked hard to develop it into a healthy and growing church complex.

The present rectory building was built in 1919, as a residence for Father C. Stratman. Architect J. P. Guth of Omaha designed the home in 1916. The rectory was quite an elegant, and no doubt expensive, residence for a small parish to provide. The house included several built-in elements, such as oak paneling, a buffet and a window seat in the dining room, chests of drawers and mirrors in the bedrooms, and pantries and cabinets in the kitchen. There was a library and a conservatory. The construction of this house was a grand undertaking, but it was necessary to provide a large parsonage for the resident priest in order to provide a place to stay for visiting clergy. There were few other places in St. Helena to provide a bed for a visiting priest, aside from parishioners' homes. The house maintains a high level of historic integrity. The kitchen has been altered, and the paneling in the dining room has been partially obscured. Other than these minor alterations, the house remains accurate to its original design.

Criteria Evaluation

St. Helena was established by German-Americans over 140 years ago, and continues to be a community united by their common heritage and their faith. Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory are eligible for the National Register due to their architectural value. The church meets the requirements established under criterion consideration A in that it derives its primary significance from its architectural distinction. The sheer scale of the church and rectory show the importance this community placed on its religion. The central location of the church within the town displays the symbolic central nature of the church to its community. The church has always been the spiritual and social center of St. Helena, and the edifices that they built to house these functions reflect this well. Immaculate Conception Church is massive compared to the size of St. Helena itself. It was built in this scale in order to better serve the entire Catholic community of the surrounding vicinity. Its dominance on the landscape and its architectural distinction illustrates the importance placed on its planning and design.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory
Name of Property

Section 9 Page 1

County and State

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St. Helena Centennial: 1858-1958. St. Helena Centennial Organization, St. Helena, Nebraska.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory

Name of Property

Cedar County, Nebraska

County and State

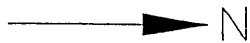
Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The legal description for the property is described as Lots 1-16 of Block 69 in the Original Plat of St. Helena, Cedar County, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and Rectory are those that have historically encompassed the buildings and sites belonging to the church.



ST. HELENA STREET

CONCRETE RETAINING WALL WITH CAST IRON FENCE

LEAF BEARING TREE

GARAGE

RECTORY

(PRIVATE OWNER)

SIDEWALK

CONCRETE RETAINING WALL

BUSH

FUEL TANK

PARISH CENTER

CHURCH

SIDEWALK

SIDEWALK

SIDEWALK

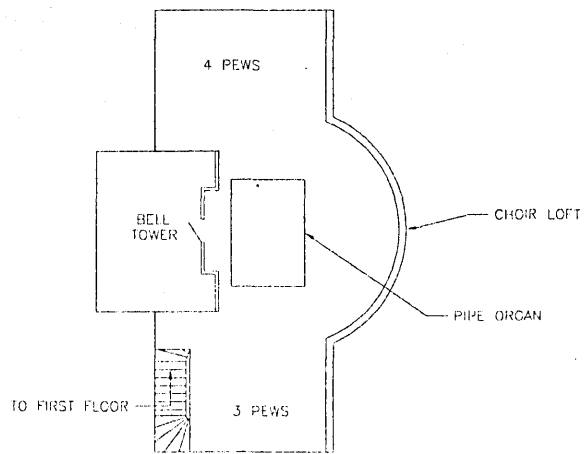
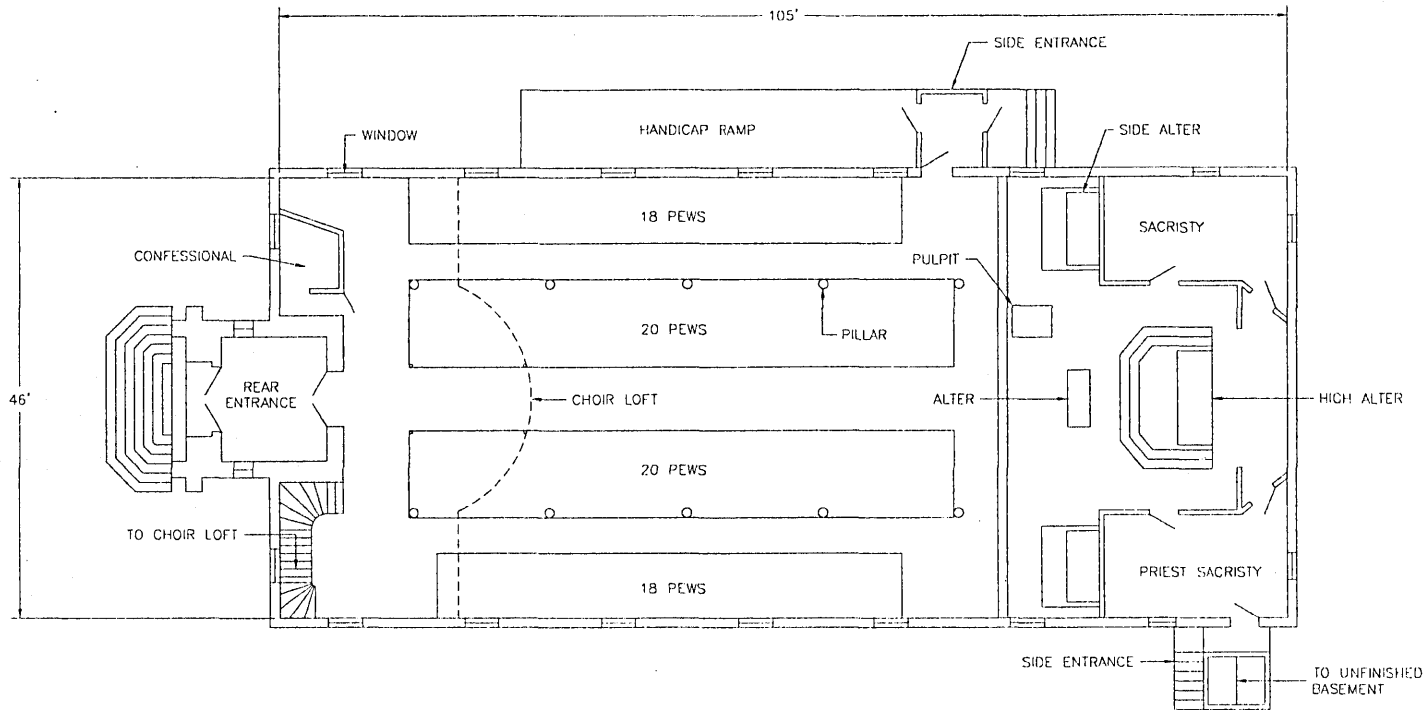
PINE/SPRUCE TREE

BLOCK 69

10TH STREET

9TH STREET

IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION CHURCH
ST. HELENA, NEBRASKA
SITE PLAN



This drawing is for a pictorial purpose only.
The locations and dimensions are only approximate.

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
CHURCH
ST. HELENA, NEBRASKA
FLOOR PLAN**

